

Erridupizir's triumph and Old Akkadian *sa'pum* "foot"

A. R. George

The dictionaries do not speculate on the Old Akkadian form of later *šēpum* "foot", for no such form appears in the *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (1981), in volume 18/2 of the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (1992), or in I. J. Gelb's *Glossary of Old Akkadian* (1957), except under the logographic writing DU. Nor is this word booked in Rebecca Hasselbach's new study of *Sargonic Akkadian* (2005).

A phonetic spelling occurs unnoticed in the first of the three monumental inscriptions of the Gutian ruler Erridupizir published by Raphael Kutscher in 1989. The inscription, here cited as Erridupizir A, is an Old Babylonian copy from Nippur taken from a monument dedicated by Erridupizir to the god Enlil in Nippur. It records his victory over an enemy army. The passage in question quotes the victor's declaration in direct speech:

¹³ *en-ma* ¹⁴ *e-er-ri-du-pi-zi-ir* ¹⁵ *da-nūm* ¹⁶ *šar(lugal)* ¹⁷ *qū-ti-^Γim* ¹⁸ [*ù*] ¹⁹ [*ki*]-^Γ*ib-ra*¹-
tim ²⁰ [*a*]*r-ba-im* ²¹ *in u-mi-su* ²² *šalmā(dùl)*^{me} ²³ *ab-ni-ma* ²⁴ *in na-pá-áš^l-ti-su* ²⁵ *sa-ap-*
su ²⁶ *iš^Γ-ku-un*

Erridupizir A ii 13–26, ed. Kutscher 1989, 53; Frayne 1993, 222

Here *sa-ap-su* was previously parsed from "*sabu*, a red stone" (Kutscher 1989, 64) and *šamšum* "sun disk" (Hallo *apud* Kutscher) or left untranslated (Frayne). A parsing from *sa'pum* "foot" (cf. Old Babylonian *šēpum*, *šipum*) yields much better sense, allowing the following translation:

Thus Erridupizir, mighty king of Gutium [and the] four quarters: "At that time I fashioned my monument and placed my foot (tablet: he placed his foot) at his throat."

The spelling *sa-ap-su* for *sa'apsu* is unexceptional in a Sargonic royal inscription from Nippur. According to Militarev and Kogan's *Semitic Etymological Dictionary*, Akkadian *šēpum* derives from a root I-š₂ (2000, 241–2 no. 269 **šayp-*). Other Nippur copies of Sargonic inscriptions use the signs *sa* and *sá*, apparently in free variation, for the two syllables /š₁a/ and /š₂a/ (see Hasselbach 2005, 69–70), and they do not always indicate explicitly a syllable boundary between two vowels (e.g. *ar-ba-um* for 'arba'um, *ar-ba-im* for 'arba'im, *ša-ir* for θā'ir passim). The /a/ vowel in *sa-ap-su* speaks against a contracted form, **sāpsu*, for the Old Babylonian *šēpum* shows that the outcome of the contraction /a'x/ in this word was a raising of the vowel to /ē/. I have had the advantage of corresponding about the root of *šēpum* with Dr Kogan. He identifies the middle consonant as /'₁/ (hamza) by reference to Soqotri, where Leslau reported a dual form *ša'fī*, and points out that a development *sa'pum* → *šēpum* finds a parallel in Akkadian *rēšum* "head" and *šēnum* "flock", which are also from roots middle /'₁/.

As Kutscher saw (1989, 64), the subject of the third-person verb *iškun* in this passage of Erridupizir's inscription is the same as the subject of the first-person verb *abni*; the scribe (or copyist) reverted prematurely from direct speech to the narrative voice.

An identical reversion from first to third person happens in a parallel passage of an inscription of Narām-Sîn known from an Old Babylonian copy found at Ur:

¹⁷ *en-ma* ¹⁸ *na-ra-am*-^d *suen(en.zu)* ¹⁹ *da-núm* ²⁰ *šar(lugal)* ²¹ *ki-ib-ra-tim* ²² *ar-ba-im* .
 . . ³² *ì-nu-šù-[ma?]* ³³ *tám-si₄-l[í]* ³⁴ *ab-ni-[ma]* ^{iv} ¹ *a-[na]* ² ^d *sîn(en.z[u])* ³ *iš-ru-u[k]*
UET I 275 iii 17–iv 3, ed. Frayne 1993, 134; Foster 1982, 29–30

Thus Narām-Sîn, mighty king of the four quarters: “. . . At that time I fashioned my image and presented (tablet: he presented) it to Sîn as a votive offering.”

It is highly likely that Erridupizir's inscription A was partly modelled on this or a similar text.

The monument that Erridupizir made commemorated the events described in the immediately preceding passage: the capture of an enemy king, probably the ruler of Madga, and his execution in the temple of the god of Gutium (Erridupizir A i 1'–ii 11). The second clause of the passage quoted above, now revealed to describe Erridupizir placing his foot on his enemy's neck, presumably describes the symbolic scene engraved on the monument. The trampled-enemy motif was a staple image in the depiction of ancient Mesopotamian triumph, both in art and in texts. The foot-on-neck variety is most prominently articulated in words by the passage of Utu-ḫengal's victory inscription that records his ritual humiliation of the captive Gutian ruler Tirigan:

igi ^d *u[tu]-šè* *gìr-ni-šè* *mu-ná* *gú-na* *gìr bí-gub*
 Utu-ḫengal C 121–3, cf. Frayne 1993, 287

In public view (lit. in the sun's presence) he made him lie at his feet and placed his foot on his neck.

Both art and text speak for the custom of a ceremonial triumph which included a ritual humiliation of the vanquished enemy's leader. Like many another ancient ruler the victorious Erridupizir preserved the memory of that humiliation by setting it down in pictures and words and placing them in the sight of the gods.

Aage Westenholz is rightly known to Assyriologists as a leading authority on third-millennium matters, but the Danish public celebrate him also as a translator of Gilgamesh and *Enūma eliš* (Westenholz and Westenholz 1997). Aage was translating Gilgamesh as I was establishing the text for my own critical edition; we walked much of the road together, a journey that I recall with gratitude as most rewarding. I hold no expectation that this little note on Old Akkadian *sa'pum* will make as big a splash in third-millennium studies as his translations have made in the recovery of Babylonian

literature for modern readers, but I take great pleasure in placing it before him in homage to a remarkable scholar.

References

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